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CHILD-REARING PRACTICES OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC  
AND SOCIAL CLASS FAMILIES

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
AND FAMILY LIVING IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
THE TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF  
HOUSEHOLD ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY  
ESTELLA MARIE ASHLEY

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DENTON, TEXAS  
AUGUST, 1972

# Texas Woman's University

Denton, Texas

\_\_\_\_ July 24, \_\_\_\_ 19 72 \_\_\_\_

We hereby recommend that the            thesis            prepared under

our supervision by Estella Marie Ashley

entitled CHILD-REARING PRACTICES OF DIFFERENT

ETHNIC AND SOCIAL CLASS FAMILIES

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be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

To my parents and sister

For their faith, support, and encouragement  
throughout the graduate program

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Parents have always been interested in their children, but child development as a specialized area and as a professional field is comparatively new. During the present century there has been an awakening to the need for wider knowledge of child development. Many studies which have developed into an organized body of reliable knowledge about the child and development have been carried on.

Theoretical and research literature in the area of parent-child relations, especially child-rearing, has increased rapidly over the past two decades. Attitudes of parents and professionals in the area of child-rearing have changed. The attempt at good child-rearing practices during the early years is becoming more prevalent.

Democratic methods and techniques are being used in child-rearing. Successive generations of parents are becoming progressively permissive, affectionate, and likely to use psychological techniques of discipline.

Evidence from several sources indicates that the gap between socio-economic classes in regard to their patterns of child-rearing is narrowing. Low socio-economic and middle socio-economic classes are moving steadily in the direction of greater permissiveness. There is a very pressing need for better techniques of child-rearing and this need is becoming increasingly recognizable in each socio-economic class.

The parents' desire for additional child-rearing knowledge is apparent. Parents are pursuing all available sources for assistance. The importance of the area of parent-child study is receiving greater recognition during the present decade as parents seek to be as informed as possible about human growth and development.

### Statement of Problem

The present study was designed to learn more about child-rearing practices and to investigate possible differences in child-rearing practices between black and white ethnic groups of low and middle socio-economic classes. The study dealt with only two aspects of child development: 1) disciplinary techniques used by parents, and 2) parents' knowledge of child development. Specific purposes of this study were to:

- 1) compare disciplinary techniques used by low socio-economic and middle socio-economic parents,
- 2) compare knowledge of child-rearing of low socio-economic and middle socio-economic parents,
- 3) compare disciplinary techniques used by black and white ethnic parents, and
- 4) compare knowledge of child-rearing of black and white ethnic parents.

A brief review of related literature provided general background information which related to various aspects of this study.

#### Review of Literature

Families are differentiated by social-class, that is, according to a graded series of ranks or strata by which groups of people having certain privileges and restrictions are characterized. These ranks may be identified in the following areas: occupation, source of income, neighborhood, and type of house lived in. Also, in some areas with large ethnic populations, the ethnic origin may be stressed. It is recognized that in a mobile society, ethnic origin is not an adequate measure of distinction between the classes. However, ethnic background does play an important role in cultural adaptations.

Inclusive in the review of literature are some important findings from studies which have dealt with differences between ethnic groups. These studies were primarily concerned with child-rearing practices and disciplinary techniques as exercised by various social classes and/or various ethnic groups.

### Studies on Socio-Economic Classes

Many generalizations may be made with reference to the criteria for social class, but there are diversities from one community to another. Woods (36) identified the economic factor, involving amount and source of income, property ownership and occupation as usually more significant than any other factor. Miller and Swanson (25) determined social class by occupation of the husband, using the occupational categories established by the United States Bureau of the Census. Heller (19) inferred that social-economic classes vary from community to community, with money being the major factor and education being the second route to status. Reissman (28) listed four criteria that should be applied when identifying social classes:

- a) how the person lives; b) what others think of him;
- c) what he thinks of himself; and d) what he does (occupation).

Occupation, according to Reissman, has become the most frequently used index of class, either by

itself as a simple index or with other measures in a multiple index.

Social class, as defined by Kohn (21), is the aggregate of individuals who occupy broadly similar positions of prestige. Brown (9) defined social class as the occupational category of the head of the family; income held constant. McKinley (24) insisted that social class is the position one occupies in the reward system of a society or system of behavior.

Devices for the measuring of social class began more than 50 years ago. Finch and Hoehn (15) maintained that the basis for determining social class in the early years was concentrated on economic factors affecting the living conditions of the family. In the late 1940's and early 1950's the basis of measurement was broadened to take in the activities of the family members, relationships between individuals within the family group, association with persons outside the family, and other similar elements as measures of social class.

Warner, Meeker, and Eells (35) developed a system for determining social class by using the Index of Status Characteristics. Hollingshead (20) arranged the Two Factor Index of Social Positions for determining positions

within social classes. The two factors were occupation and family background.

In calling attention to the distinctive variations in social status, one should examine the particular attitudes and behaviors which characterize a distinct social class. The first investigation will be of middle socio-economic class characteristics.

Middle socio-economic families are generally considered status seekers. Woods (36) mentioned middle socio-economic families as being upwardly mobile, placing very little emphasis upon tradition. Successive generations are expected to achieve higher social status. If social mobility is achieved at a very rapid pace, a gulf may be encountered between generations. Middle socio-economic families striving for status tend to have an ever present awareness of the factors which contribute to prestige.

Reissman (28) insisted that the channels for expression in the community through voting, in local government, or just keeping informed about current affairs is dominated by the middle socio-economic class. Predominantly middle socio-economic values are taught to young children in school. Woods (36) stated that family background and tradition play very minor roles in the

acquisition of higher status by the middle socio-economic classes. During the present era education is, perhaps, one of the most reliable social elevators.

Warner, Meeker, and Eells (35) submitted occupation as being a very important index of status among the middle socio-economic class. A large heterogenous aggregate of small business men, independent farmers, professionals, intellectuals, and salaried white employees make up the middle socio-economic class. Status within the occupations is measured by the amount and source of income, authority, security in the job, and degree of personal independence.

Less than one in ten among the middle socio-economic families seeks outside assistance such as welfare. To do so would mean failure where success is all important.

In contrast to middle socio-economic class families, the low socio-economic class families are less likely to be status seekers. Warner, Meeker, and Eells (35) concluded that upwardly mobile families tend to stress cleanliness, but cleanliness is not essential to status within the group. Other socio-economic classes cannot readily detect the levels that exist within the lower socio-economic class.



In general, the lower socio-economic families who entertain ideas of social mobility and those who attempt to conform to middle socio-economic standards of living take the same or greater risks than mobile middle socio-economic families. Families of both socio-economic classes tend to follow the patterns of cultural behavior learned in childhood.

### Studies on Ethnic Groups

In addition to social class differences, there are differences between ethnic groups in child-rearing practices. From a study by Cahill (10) during 1966, involving 60 lower socio-economic class mothers, it was revealed that the ethnic group to which one belonged did not exert as strong an influence on child-rearing practices as social class. Child dominance, the use of praise, and parental discipline were some of the variables which showed important differences. Puerto Rican mothers were more permissive. White mothers fell in between the other two, with the exception that white mothers were least anxious about sex behavior and most anxious about child-rearing and child dominance. All mothers involved in the study were interviewed about the child-rearing practices of their five-year olds from birth to the time of the interview.

Ruley (29) found significant differences between child-rearing patterns among lower socio-economic class Papago Indian mothers, Mexican-American mothers, and Caucasians with respect to: a) permissiveness for aggression toward parents; b) permissiveness for aggression among siblings; c) permissiveness for aggression toward other children; d) strictness about child's bedtime; and e) warmth of mother-child relationship. Each of the subjects interviewed was of the lower socio-economic class as determined by the McGuire-White Index of Social Status, Short form. The subjects had at least one child in the first grade of the public schools and lived within the Metropolitan area of Tucson or Nogales, Arizona. A total of 150 mothers were interviewed, 50 of each cultural group.

Blau (6), in 1966, interviewed 250 mothers of one or more children. Mothers were selected on the basis of race and socio-economic class position. The interviews were conducted during their confinement on the maternity floors of four hospitals located in different parts of Chicago. Blau noted a favorable attitude among upward and downward mobility families toward change in child-rearing practices. White mothers of the middle socio-economic class were more prone to maintain the same child-rearing practices as those of their parents. Working Negro mothers of the middle

socio-economic class were less inclined toward changing their child-rearing practices than working white mothers of the middle socio-economic class. However, Negro women of upward mobility, living in integrated neighborhoods were more inclined toward employing different child-rearing practices than those of their parents.

According to Yarrow and others (37), in a study of 50 employed and 50 non-employed mothers of the Greater Washington Area, the white mother's employment status was not related to child-rearing characteristics. The study, cited above, supported the hypothesis that the mother's fulfillments or frustrations in non-mother roles are related to child-rearing. Subjects for the study were selected from twelve public schools in terms of social class criteria. Location of eligible families in eight of the schools was facilitated by data on family characteristics from a study by Gillette (17).

In 1964, Friedman (16) reported on two behavioral areas of children: a) relationship between children's primary reaction patterns in infancy and 2) aspects of child behavior at the age of three. The functioning of 56 children at the age of three, in the stated behavioral areas, were rated on six scales constructed by the

investigator. Behavioral style of the child is an important component of the total behavior, but alone does not outweigh other developmental influences. Behavior appears to be the product of interaction between individual tendencies and environmental experiences, particularly child-rearing practices. Blanket rules of child-rearing practices cannot be applied to all children, rather, it is important that parental practices be adapted to the behavioral style of the child.

During 1967, Toomey (33) interviewed families with children attending a Roman-Catholic parochial school. The families were interviewed to determine the relationship of the degree of corporal punishment at home with the grade for deportment in school. The investigation revealed that children with problems at home carried them over into the school. There was no definite method for handling, nor treatment for, children with problems. Toomey concluded that each child is different in disciplinary nature and cannot be governed by an established set of practices or guidelines in either the home or school. At the five per cent level there was evidence of parents of lower socio-economic class origin employing harsher physical punishment.

In 1969, Sethi (31) studied 57 eight to ten year old boys and girls from middle socio-economic class families and unbroken homes. Sethi concluded that parents who presented themselves as models had an obvious influence on how the children responded to frustrations. Boys were inclined to imitate fathers while girls imitated mothers. In several instances of imitative behavior the combined effect of parental uniformity across situations and uniformity between parents in response to frustration was significant in influencing children's imitation of parental responses.

In 1952, McGuire (23) stated that middle socio-economic parents do not condone physical punishment as a method of control. Punishment by isolation, disapproval and deprivation of some privilege established an early development of anticipated fear within the child. Often mothers may have knowingly established themselves as a model for learning through identification and imitation.

Parental attitudes toward the discipline of a child is of major importance if the desired effect is accomplished. To accomplish desired behavior Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (30) explained that punishment must be combined with suggestions of acceptable behavior. This conclusion

was derived from data collected in 1957 from mothers of the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant faiths. Sears and his colleagues further found that physical punishment used simultaneously with extensive use of reasoning was more effective than the use of punishment alone. Parke (27) confirmed these findings when he analyzed studies of other researchers and concluded that in order to obtain preferred behavior one must seek favorable responses while diminishing undesirable behavior.

Aronfreed (3), in 1965, made a survey using propositions based on a study in which the effects of four devices of punishment position were used. Findings indicated that the longer the delay between the misdemeanor and the resulting punishment the less effective punishment was for producing the effect sought.

Lafore (22), in 1964, used direct, on-the-scene observation and concluded that expressions of hostility were greater from those children whose parents presented the largest number of instances of dictation and interference. Instances of frequent crying was indicative of parents who blamed, hurried, threatened, punished, and interfered with activities of the children.

Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (30) concluded that effective punishment as a training device should be accompanied by techniques which reinforce behaviors desired. Without the reinforcement techniques the desired new behavior will not replace the old behavior. Substitution of a new behavior can be obtained more readily if it occurs in the same setting that originally produced the misdemeanor.

### Studies on Child-Rearing Practices

Duvall (13), in 1956, described two types of child-rearing: traditional and developmental. Traditional child-rearing was characterized by respect and obedience, whereas, developmental child-rearing was characterized by emphasis on growth and development. Mothers of children five years of age and older were more inclined toward the traditional way of thinking in child-rearing. The developmental way of thinking was characteristic of those mothers who had children under five years of age. The explanation for this was that mothers with children under five might have been influenced by child-rearing ideas of the 1940's, whereas, mothers with children five years of age and older were influenced by ideas that were new in the 1930's.

A study by Davis and Havighurst (11), in 1946, gave clear evidence of considerable social class differences in child-rearing practices. Middle socio-economic class parents are more rigorous than lower socio-economic class parents in their training of children for feeding and cleanliness. Parents of the middle socio-economic class also expect their children to take responsibility for themselves earlier than lower socio-economic class parents. Differences in child-rearing practices between the middle socio-economic and lower socio-economic classes were significant. These differences were greater than those observed between ethnic groups of the same social class. In 1963, Kohn (21) described the problem of social and parent-child relationships as an instance of the more general problem of the effects of social structure on behavior.

During the middle 1940's, Davis and Havighurst (11) presented evidence that middle socio-economic families were less permissive than lower socio-economic families in child-rearing. Children of middle socio-economic families were more frustrated than lower socio-economic children because of being placed under a stricter regimen than children of low socio-economic parents. These frustrations resulted because middle socio-economic children were



subjected earlier and more consistently to the ideas that made orderly, conscientious, responsible, and tame persons of children.

From a comparative study of socialization of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, in 1970, Bronfenbrenner (8) discerned orderly change of child-rearing techniques in the United States. Many changes in the child-training techniques employed by middle socio-economic class parents have taken place in the past century. Similar changes have been taking place in the lower socio-economic class. However, lower socio-economic parents have lagged behind by a few years. Middle socio-economic class parents of a quarter of a century ago were more "restrictive" than were lower socio-economic parents, today the middle socio-economic parents are more "permissive." The gap between the social classes seems to be narrowing.

Kohn (21), in 1963, explained that child-rearing is more problematic to middle socio-economic parents than to lower socio-economic parents. This situation appeared to be deeply rooted in the conditions of life of the two social classes.

In 1946, Ericson (14) interviewed 48 middle socio-economic class and 52 lower socio-economic class mothers to compare child-rearing practices and social status. Investigated were child-rearing techniques such as weaning, thumbsucking, cleanliness training, environmental exploration, control, age, and sex roles. Differences were found in certain areas. Middle socio-economic class parents tended to begin training their children earlier than lower socio-economic class parents. Middle socio-economic families placed responsibility on the children earlier, supervised the children closer, and placed greater emphasis on individual achievement. Middle socio-economic parents were found to be more strict in their expectations. Differences were found primarily in feeding, cleanliness training, environmental exploration, and control.

Ericson (14) further described the systematic differences between classes in regard to child-rearing and crucial matters such as weaning and cleanliness training. Middle socio-economic class and lower socio-economic class children lived in well defined cultures. Training began earlier in middle socio-economic classes. Parents of middle socio-economic children subjected their children to more frustration in learning. Children were probably more anxious as a result of these pressures. Lower socio-

economic class parents tended to be more lenient in the training of children.

In 1956, Douvan (12) reported a study of middle socio-economic and low socio-economic adolescents. The study compared the degree of achievement motivation that adolescents displayed in two success-failure situations which differed in reward potential. Douvan concluded that the pattern of achievement motivation a child develops depends on the class subculture in which he is trained, and is functional to the values and behavior requirements with which he will be confronted as he assumes adulthood within that setting.

During 1957, a study by Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (30) involving 419 American mothers of the Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant faiths indicated that middle socio-economic mothers with higher education seemed to impose fewer restrictions and demands upon their children than did the lower socio-economic class mothers with less education. Data for the study were secured from three different communities: Homestead, a New Mexican village with a population originating in the dust bowl areas of Texas and Oklahoma; Rimrock, a city of Mormon tradition located near Homestead, and a suburban metropolitan area

in New England. The interview method was used to collect the data.

### Studies on Child-Rearing Knowledge

Baumrind (4), in a critical analysis on the effects of authoritative parental control on child behavior, surmised that parents should be taught how to punish children effectively and humanely rather than to have parents believe that punishment is ineffective or naturally harmful. Gruenberg (18) stated that parent education began in New York during the 1800's and early 1900's. Since that time the education of parents has increased in usefulness and public acceptance. Parent education has become an important part of the field of education.

Brim (7) described an objective of parent education as being one to give parents an abundance of skills for solving problems, and yet make parents cognizant of the fact that these skills do not always solve the problem. Through group meetings, parents received the benefit of educational resources that have been developing over the years. Bernhardt and others (5) pointed out that parents develop a better outlook after having attended parent education courses and having learned what a parent should be.

A study involving 95 mothers who had at least one child in one of nine public schools in Sunnyvale, California, was conducted by Adams (1) in 1959. The results of the study indicated that the mothers who had children with problems sought the advice of physicians rather than the services of psychological counselors and school counselors. Adams inferred that a possible reason for this could have been that the parents were not aware of the services of psychological and school counselors.

Brim (7) emphasized that through advanced knowledge parents and parent educators become aware that each generation of parents makes use of information and techniques relative to child-rearing that are available to them. As a result, educators and parents share advice while being aware that knowledge is always of probable, not ultimate, validity.

## CHAPTER II

### PROCEDURE

The present study was designed to investigate child-rearing practices of selected middle socio-economic and low socio-economic families. A comparison of child-rearing practices between black and white ethnic families was also a major consideration. Data for the study were secured through interviews, during the spring and summer of 1971. A total of 100 low socio-economic and middle socio-economic families living in Union, South Carolina participated in the study. Interviews were conducted by two teachers of the junior high school in the city of Union.

Union is located in the northwestern section of South Carolina. This city has a population of 11,000 persons residing within the 4.42 square miles of the city limits. Of the 11,000 persons, approximately 28 per cent are black and 72 per cent are white. Employment in the area is principally in the numerous large and small textile industries in Union and outlying areas. Agriculture, forestry, livestock, and poultry round out the economy.

### Instruments Used

Three instruments were used to secure data for the study. Descriptions of the three instruments follow.

#### Interview Schedule

In order to secure information on family background an "Interview Schedule" was used. The "Interview Schedule" was adapted from the "Interview Schedule" used by Sparks (32) in 1968. The purpose of this instrument was to collect information in the following areas: 1) age of parents; 2) education of parents; 3) occupation of parents; and 4) financial assistance received by family.

#### Techniques of Discipline

The check sheet, "Techniques of Discipline" was designed by Adams (2). This investigator used the check sheet to attempt to determine what techniques were used by black and white ethnic parents of low socio-economic and middle socio-economic classes when disciplining their children.

#### Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge

To secure a knowledge of how much parents knew about child-rearing and parental guidance, the investigator asked

parents to give an answer to a list of child-rearing statements. These statements were used to measure the parents' knowledge of certain aspects of rest, speech, anxiety, and methods of guidance. The statements used by this investigator were adapted from Montgomery's (26) "Maternal Child-Rearing Knowledge," Form III. The three instruments used in this study follow.



## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Characteristics of the Home and  
General Background Factors

Name of mother \_\_\_\_\_

Age: up to 25 \_\_\_\_\_

26 to 35 \_\_\_\_\_

36 to 45 \_\_\_\_\_

46 &amp; over \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation of mother \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education completed:

Elementary \_\_\_\_\_

Senior high \_\_\_\_\_

Junior high \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name of father \_\_\_\_\_

Age: up to 25 \_\_\_\_\_

26 to 35 \_\_\_\_\_

36 to 45 \_\_\_\_\_

46 &amp; over \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation of father \_\_\_\_\_

Highest level of education completed:

Elementary \_\_\_\_\_

Senior high \_\_\_\_\_

Junior high \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE--Continued

Financial assistance received by family, if any:

Social security \_\_\_\_\_

Child support \_\_\_\_\_

Welfare \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get your ideas on how to bring up your children?:

Own parents \_\_\_\_\_

P.T.A. \_\_\_\_\_

Other relatives \_\_\_\_\_

Community groups \_\_\_\_\_

Literature \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Friends \_\_\_\_\_

Health department \_\_\_\_\_

Other sources \_\_\_\_\_

## TECHNIQUES OF DISCIPLINE

Check Sheet

Please check to show the disciplinary techniques that you use. Also check the techniques used most often.

Techniques	Techniques used	Used most often
Reasoning		
Spanking		
Praising		
Substituting activities		
Assisting child with routine		
Isolation		
Scolding		
Rewarding		
Ignoring		
Coaxing		
Nagging		

TECHNIQUES OF DISCIPLINE--Continued

Techniques	Techniques used	Used most often
Condemning		
Slapping		
Bribery		
Teasing		
Comparing		
Ridiculing		
Putting to bed		
Washing mouth with soap		
Pinching		
Pulling hair		
Biting		
Frightening him		

## STATEMENTS OF CHILD REARING KNOWLEDGE

Read each statement carefully. Place a check in the appropriate column.

Child Rearing Statements	True	False	Do not know
Some children need more sleep than other children			
Lack of adequate sleep is reflected in the appearance of the child			
Emotional aspects of the home are important in promoting good sleep habits			
Some fears which increase during the preschool period are fears of imaginary creatures, being alone, and fears of the dark			
A child tends to reflect the fears of parents			
Some behavior problems occur as a result of growth			
Sulking and whining become more common expressions of anger as children grow older			

STATEMENTS OF CHILD REARING KNOWLEDGE--  
Continued

Child Rearing Statements	True	False	Do not know
Lack of sleep is reflected in a child's behavior			
Stuttering or repetitions are frequent in children between 2 and 5 years of age			
Maternal attitudes toward toilet training are independent of attitudes toward other behaviors			
Anxieties established during the toilet training period may make sexual adjustment in adolescence and adulthood more difficult			
Temporary lapses in bowel and bladder control may develop from strict training by the mother			
Speech difficulties may be regarded as normal during the preschool years			
Strict physical punishment is a common cause of aggressiveness			

STATEMENTS OF CHILD REARING KNOWLEDGE--  
Continued

Child Rearing Statements	True	False	Do not know
Isolation is often devoted to exploring the genital organs or daydreaming			
Boys and girls of the same preschool age have equal language skills			

Analytical Techniques

In order to obtain data on family background the "Interview Schedule" was used. This information was used to determine socio-economic status of each family. Occupations were categorized according to the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, 1968 Supplement (34). 30

Information concerning the disciplinary techniques was collected through use of a check sheet. Techniques were categorized either as positive or negative and analyzed in terms of numbers, percentages, and the chi-square technique.

Data for child-rearing knowledge were measured according to an answer sheet developed by Montgomery (26). Information was analyzed by the chi-square technique. All data were computed on an IBM 1620 computer.



## CHAPTER III

### PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to determine if there were significant differences in disciplinary techniques used by low socio-economic and middle socio-economic parents in Union, South Carolina. Child-rearing knowledge was investigated to measure the parents' knowledge of acceptable child-rearing practices. The investigator further categorized the respondents by ethnic groups (black and white) to determine if the two groups differed in their use of disciplinary techniques and in their expressed knowledge of child-rearing practices.

Data used for the investigation were collected from a selected sample of 100 families including 38 middle socio-economic and 62 low socio-economic families. The 100 participating families were also subdivided and compared according to ethnic identification. Thirty-eight of the families were of the white ethnic group and 62 families were of the black ethnic group. Names of families were secured through the school in which the interviewers

were employed. Information was collected through interviews using three instruments: 1) Interview Schedule; 2) Techniques of Discipline; and 3) Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge. Data were obtained in each of the following areas:

- 1) general background information of parents,
- 2) disciplinary techniques of parents, and
- 3) general child-rearing knowledge of parents.

General information on background of parents was presented and analyzed in terms of percentages. The chi-square technique was employed to determine if significant differences existed between low socio-economic parents and middle socio-economic parents relative to their expressed knowledge of child-rearing practices. The chi-square technique was also used to test the significance of differences between black and white ethnic groups in terms of use of disciplinary techniques and expressed knowledge of child-rearing practices. A chi-square value large enough to be significant at the .05 level was accepted as indicative of a significant difference between two groups.

#### Family Background Information

A total of 100 families participated in this study. The age range of the mothers and fathers was from below

25 to 46 and over. A large proportion of the mothers (41.0 per cent) ranged from 26 to 35 years of age. Thirty-eight per cent of the fathers were in the 36 to 45 year old range (Table I).

The majority of the mothers (55.0 per cent) were senior high school graduates and 19.0 per cent were college graduates. Of the fathers who participated in the study, 41.0 percent had completed high school. Twenty-one per cent had completed college (Table I).

Fifty-eight per cent of the mothers were employed, of these, 23.0 per cent were employed in the machine trades, only 15.0 per cent were employed professionally. Thirty-eight per cent of the fathers were employed in the machine trades. Only 11.0 per cent were employed professionally.

Seventeen per cent of the families indicated receiving financial assistance. Four of these families indicated receiving financial assistance from two sources. Seven per cent indicated receiving no financial assistance and 80.0 per cent did not response to that item on the questionnaire.

TABLE I

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF 100 FAMILIES  
PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Characteristics	Number	Per cent
<u>Ages</u>		
Mothers		
Up to 25	17	17.0
26 to 35	41	41.0
36 to 45	36	36.0
46 and over	5	5.0
No response	1	1.0
Fathers		
Up to 25	10	10.0
26 to 35	29	29.0
36 to 45	38	38.0
46 and over	6	6.0
No response	17	17.0
<u>Education</u>		
Mothers		
Elementary	3	3.0
Junior high	19	19.0
Senior high	55	55.0
College	19	19.0
Other	2	2.0
No response	2	2.0
Fathers		
Elementary	7	7.0
Junior high	12	12.0
Senior high	41	41.0
College	21	21.0
Other	2	2.0
No response	17	17.0

TABLE I--Continued

Characteristics	Number	Per cent
<u>Occupation</u>		
Mothers		
Professional	15	15.0
Clerical and sales occupation	5	5.0
Service occupation	15	15.0
Machine trades	23	23.0
Unemployed	39	39.0
No response	3	3.0
Fathers		
Professional	11	11.0
Clerical and sales occupation	3	3.0
Service occupation	10	10.0
Machine trades	38	38.0
Unemployed	7	7.0
No response	19	19.0
<u>Financial Assistance*</u>		
None	7	7.0
Social security	5	5.0
Welfare	4	4.0
Child support	1	1.0
Other	7	7.0
No response	80	80.0

\*Four families indicated receiving financial assistance from more than one source.

Discussion Of Socio-Economic Classes

## Background Information

The Dictionary of Occupational Index, 1968 Supplement (34), was employed in order to stratify the 100 participating families into socio-economic classes. Socio-economic classes were determined according to the occupations of the fathers and/or mothers. Occupations of mothers were used to classify only those families of which mothers were heads of household. Sixty-two families were classified in the low socio-economic class and thirty-eight families were in the middle socio-economic class. General background information on socio-economic classes was discussed in terms of percentages.

Data collected regarding the occupations of fathers indicated that a proportionately larger number of the fathers of the middle socio-economic class (36.8 per cent) and the low socio-economic class (38.7 per cent) were employed in the machine trades. Of the 100 families, 5.3 per cent of the middle socio-economic class and 29.0 per cent of the low socio-economic class were matriarchal. A larger proportion of the mothers of the middle socio-economic class (31.6 per cent) were in professional occupations. The largest group of employed mothers in the

low socio-economic class (30.6 per cent) were in the machine trades (Table II).

The age ranges used in the study were the same for fathers and mothers in each socio-economic classes. The largest percentage of fathers (55.3 per cent) in the middle socio-economic class were between the ages of 36 to 45 years. An equal proportion of the fathers (27.4 per cent) in the low socio-economic class were in two age ranges (26 to 35 years of age and 36 to 45 years of age). The largest percentage (52.6 per cent) of mothers in the middle socio-economic class were between the ages of 26 to 35 years. Within the low socio-economic class the largest percentage (35.5 per cent) were in the 36 to 45 years of age range (Table II).

Most of the fathers (52.6 per cent) in the middle socio-economic class indicated college as the highest level of education completed. The majority of fathers (45.3 per cent) in the low socio-economic class indicated senior high as their highest level of education. A larger proportion of the mothers in the middle socio-economic class (47.4 per cent) indicated senior high as their highest level of education completed. The larger percentage of mothers (59.8 per cent) in the low socio-economic class indicated their highest level of education

TABLE II

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF TWO SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
CLASSES PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Characteristics	Socio-Economic Classes			
	Middle (N=38)		Low (N=62)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
<u>Ages</u>				
Mothers				
Up to 25	2	5.3	15	24.2
26 to 35	20	52.6	21	33.8
36 to 45	14	36.9	22	35.5
46 and over	1	2.6	4	6.5
No response	1	2.6	0	0.0
Fathers				
Up to 25	2	5.3	8	12.9
26 to 35	12	31.5	17	27.4
36 to 45	21	55.3	17	27.4
46 and over	1	2.6	5	8.1
No response	2	5.3	15	24.2
<u>Education</u>				
Mothers				
Elementary	0	0.0	3	4.8
Junior high	1	2.6	18	29.0
Senior high	18	47.4	37	59.8
College	16	42.1	3	4.8
Other	2	5.3	0	0.0
No response	1	2.6	1	1.6
Fathers				
Elementary	1	2.6	6	9.7
Junior high	0	0.0	12	19.4
Senior high	13	34.2	28	45.3
College	20	52.6	1	1.6
Other	2	5.3	0	0.0
No response	2	5.3	15	24.2



TABLE II--Continued

Characteristics	Socio-Economic Classes			
	Middle (N=38)		Low (N=62)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
<u>Occupations</u>				
Mothers				
Professional	12	31.6	3	4.8
Clerical and sales occupations	4	10.5	1	1.6
Service occupations	3	7.9	12	19.4
Machine trades	4	10.5	19	30.6
Unemployed	14	36.9	25	40.4
No response	1	2.6	2	3.2
Fathers				
Professional	11	28.9	0	0.0
Clerical and sales occupations	3	7.9	0	0.0
Service occupations	3	7.9	7	11.3
Machine trades	14	36.8	24	38.7
Structural work	3	7.9	8	12.9
Unemployed	2	5.3	5	8.1
No response	2	5.3	18	29.0
<u>Financial Assistance*</u>				
None	2	5.3	5	8.1
Social security	2	5.3	3	4.8
Welfare	0	0.0	4	6.5
Child support	1	2.6	0	0.0
Other	2	5.3	5	8.1
No response	33	86.8	47	75.8

\*Two families in the middle socio-economic class and two families in the low socio-economic class indicated receiving financial assistance from more than one source.

completed as senior high (Table II).

Of the thirty-eight parents in the middle socio-economic class the majority (86.8 per cent) did not respond to the item concerning type of financial assistance received. Within the low socio-economic class 75.8 per cent did not respond to that item on the questionnaire (Table II).

### Sources of Child-Rearing Ideas

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to indicate sources from which ideas on child-rearing were received. Within the middle socio-economic class (97.4 per cent) and within the low socio-economic class (90.3 per cent) a vast majority of the respondents indicated that ideas on child-rearing were received from their parents. Parents in the low socio-economic class indicated literature, relatives, church, and friends, respectively, as other important sources from which they received ideas on child-rearing. Proportionately few of the parents in the middle socio-economic class indicated sources other than their own parents. However, friends and other relatives ranked second and third, respectively, as sources from which this group received ideas on child-rearing (Table III).

TABLE III

SOURCES FROM WHICH PARENTS OF TWO SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
CLASSES RECEIVED IDEAS ON CHILD-REARING

Sources	Socio-Economic Classes			
	Middle (N=38)		Low (N=62)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Own parents	37	97.4	56	90.3
Other relatives	28	73.7	14	22.6
Literature	31	81.6	12	19.4
Friends	20	52.6	22	35.5
P.T.A.	7	18.4	8	12.9
Community groups	5	13.2	10	16.1
Church	21	55.3	10	16.1
Health department	4	10.5	8	12.9
Other sources	1	2.6	2	3.2

### Disciplinary Techniques

#### Positive Techniques of Discipline

The present study revealed significant differences between the middle and low socio-economic classes in the use of all the positive techniques of discipline listed. Parents of the middle socio-economic class indicated more extensive use of the listed positive techniques of discipline than did the parents of the low socio-economic class (Table IV).

TABLE IV

DIFFERENCES IN USE OF POSITIVE TECHNIQUES OF  
DISCIPLINE BY TWO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES

Positive Techniques of Discipline	Use of Positive Techniques						Analysis	
	Per cent of Middle Socio-Economic Class			Per cent of Low Socio-Economic Class				
	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Chi <sup>2</sup>	P*
Reasoning	73.7	26.3	0.0	37.1	35.5	27.4	17.22	<.05
Rewarding	15.8	55.3	28.9	12.9	27.4	59.7	9.58	<.05
Praising	36.8	57.9	5.3	27.4	21.0	51.6	24.74	<.05
Substituting activities	23.7	57.9	18.4	11.3	24.2	64.5	20.15	<.05
Assisting child with routine	15.8	68.4	15.8	9.7	48.4	41.9	7.46	<.05

\*P <.05 indicates that the chi<sup>2</sup> value would occur only 5/100 times by chance.

Parents of the middle and low socio-economic classes differed significantly in their use of praising as a positive technique of discipline. Parents of the middle socio-economic class indicated the use of praising with greater frequency than did the parents of the low socio-economic class. The middle socio-economic parents indicated broader use of reasoning than did the parents in the low socio-economic class. However, reasoning was indicated as the positive technique of discipline used most extensively by the parents in the low socio-economic class. Although parents in the low socio-economic class used the rewarding technique less than any of the other positive techniques of discipline, statistics showed that it was used more extensively by them than by parents of the low socio-economic class.

#### Negative Techniques of Discipline

The negative techniques of discipline which were used in this study are compared in Table V. Spanking was shown to be a technique used significantly more by parents of the low socio-economic class than by parents of the middle socio-economic class. The low socio-economic class used putting to bed with significantly greater frequency than did the middle socio-economic class. Even though putting to bed was used significantly more by the low socio-economic

class, the middle socio-economic class indicated use of it sometimes as a disciplinary technique. However, the middle socio-economic class chose isolation at a significantly higher rate as a disciplinary technique than did the low socio-economic class. Indications were that the low socio-economic class did use isolation sometimes as a disciplinary technique. Only the low socio-economic class indicated using washing the mouth with soap and slapping as techniques of discipline. Nagging, pulling hair, and biting were not used as disciplinary techniques by the parents of either the middle or the low socio-economic class (Table V).

#### Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge

When compared with respect to socio-economic classes, the respondents indicated significant differences in their opinion on ten of the seventeen true-false statements on child-rearing knowledge. A majority of the middle and low socio-economic classes answered the following four true statements as true:

- 1) lack of adequate sleep is reflected in the appearance of the child,
- 2) emotional aspects of the home are important in promoting good sleep habits,
- 3) a child tends to reflect the fears of parents, and

TABLE V

DIFFERENCES IN USE OF NEGATIVE TECHNIQUES OF DISCIPLINE  
BY TWO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES

Negative Techniques of Discipline	Use of Negative Techniques							Analysis	
	Per cent of Middle Socio-Economic Class			Per cent of Low Socio-Economic Class					
	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response			
	Chi <sup>2</sup>	P							
Isolation	7.9	55.3	36.8	3.2	24.2	72.6	12.44	<.05	
Scolding	10.5	55.3	34.2	14.5	38.7	46.8	2.61	>.05	
Spanking	23.7	71.1	5.3	66.1	27.4	6.5	18.74	<.05	
Ignoring	2.6	15.8	81.6	1.6	29.0	69.4	2.34	>.05	
Coaxing	7.9	15.8	76.3	1.6	21.0	77.4	2.66	>.05	
Nagging	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05	
Condemning	0.0	2.6	97.4	1.6	1.6	96.8	0.00	>.05	
Slapping	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	11.3	88.7	4.61	>.05	
Bribery	0.0	2.6	97.4	0.0	4.8	95.2	0.29	>.05	
Teasing	0.0	2.6	97.4	1.6	6.5	91.9	0.75	>.05	
Comparing	0.0	7.9	92.1	0.0	12.9	87.1	0.61	>.05	
Ridiculing	0.0	7.9	92.1	3.2	4.8	91.9	0.33	>.05	

TABLE V--Continued

Negative Techniques of Discipline	Use of Negative Techniques							Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
	Per cent of Middle Socio-Economic Class			Per cent of Low Socio-Economic Class			Analysis		
	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response			
Putting to bed	5.3	28.9	65.8	25.8	48.4	25.8	16.88	<.05	
Washing mouth with soap	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	1.6	98.4	0.00	>.05	
Pinching	2.6	0.0	97.4	0.0	6.5	93.5	0.00	>.05	
Pulling hair	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05	
Biting	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05	
Frightening him	0.0	5.3	94.7	0.0	8.1	91.9	0.00	>.05	

\*P <.05 indicates that the chi<sup>2</sup> value would occur only 5/100 times by chance.



- 4) some fears which increase during the pre-school periods are fears of imaginary creatures, being alone, and fears of the dark.

In each instance, however, a significantly larger proportion of the middle socio-economic class marked the statements true (Table VI).

A significantly large per cent of parents in the middle socio-economic class (73.0 per cent) responded true to the statement concerning sulking and whining as an expression of anger as the child grows older, while the low socio-economic parents reflected a misconception by a proportionately large per cent of false responses to the statement. Parents of both classes held misconceptions with respect to the influence of anxieties established during toilet training on sexual adjustments in adolescence and adulthood. However, a notably larger proportion (44.7 per cent) of the parents in the middle socio-economic class reflected this misconception by responding false to the statement.

Of those responding to the statements on the normalcy of speech difficulties during pre-school years, the respondents in the low socio-economic class showed a greater percentage of correct responses (true), while a

TABLE VI  
RESPONSES OF MIDDLE AND LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES  
TO STATEMENTS OF CHILD-REARING KNOWLEDGE

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Socio-Economic Classes						Analysis	
	Middle			Low				
	True	False	Do Not Know	True	False	Do Not Know	Chi <sup>2</sup>	P*
Some children need more sleep than other children	84.2	5.3	10.5	80.6	9.7	9.7	0.63	>.05
Lack of adequate sleep is reflected in the appearance of the child	97.4	2.6	0.0	67.7	30.6	1.6	11.81	<.05
Lack of adequate sleep is reflected in a child's behavior	97.4	2.6	0.0	98.4	1.6	0.0	0.00	>.05
Emotional aspects of the home are important in promoting good sleep habits	92.1	2.6	5.3	61.3	12.1	25.8	11.35	<.05

TABLE VI--Continued

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Socio-Economic Classes						Analysis	
	Middle			Low			Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
	True	False	Do Not Know	True	False	Do Not Know		
Some fears which increase during the pre-school period are fears of imaginary creatures, being alone, and fears of the dark	84.2	15.8	0.0	56.5	32.3	11.3	8.21	<.05
A child tends to reflect the fears of parents	86.8	13.2	0.0	54.8	3.9	9.7	11.12	<.05
A child can be talked out of his fears	71.1	15.8	13.2	46.8	37.1	16.1	6.31	<.05
Some behavior problems occur as a result of growth	76.3	5.3	18.4	66.1	16.1	16.1	2.72	>.05
Sulking and whining become more common expressions of anger as children grow older	73.7	21.1	5.3	33.9	48.4	17.7	15.08	<.05

TABLE VI--Continued

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Socio-Economic Classes						Analysis	
	Middle			Low				
	True	False	Do Not Know	True	False	Do Not Know	Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
Stuttering or repetitions are frequent in children between 2 and 5 years of age	26.3	63.2	10.5	45.2	41.9	12.9	4.44	>.05
Maternal attitudes toward toilet training are independent of attitudes toward other behaviors	71.8	28.9	0.0	27.4	32.3	40.3	25.60	<.05
Anxieties established during the toilet training period may make sexual adjustment in adolescence and adulthood more difficult	31.6	44.7	21.1	22.6	30.6	45.2	19.33	<.05
Temporary lapses in bowel and bladder control may develop from strict training by the mother	50.0	42.1	7.9	29.0	56.5	14.5	4.61	>.05

TABLE VI--Continued

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Socio-Economic Classes						Analysis	
	Middle			Low			Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
	True	False	Do Not Know	True	False	Do Not Know		
Speech difficulties may be regarded as normal during the pre-school years	44.7	52.6	2.6	69.4	25.8	3.2	7.08	<.05
Strict physical punish- ment is a common cause of aggressiveness	39.5	36.8	23.7	43.5	35.5	21.0	0.18	>.05
Isolation is often devoted to exploring the genital organs or daydreaming	44.7	50.0	5.3	58.1	27.4	14.5	5.96	>.05
Boys and girls of the same pre-school age have equal language skills	15.8	73.7	10.5	37.1	50.0	12.9	6.04	<.05

\*p <.05 indicates that the chi<sup>2</sup> value would occur only 5/100 times by chance.

majority of the middle socio-economic class believed the statement to be false.

According to Montgomery (14), only three of the seventeen statements were false:

- 1) A child can be talked out of his fears,
- 2) Maternal attitudes toward toilet training are independent of attitudes toward other behaviors, and
- 3) Boys and girls of the same pre-school age have equal language skills.

With respect to the three false statements on the questionnaire, only one statement was believed to be false by parents of both socio-economic classes: boys and girls of the same pre-school age have equal language skills. A greater percentage of the low socio-economic class responded false to the statement than did the middle socio-economic class. Both groups of parents believed that a child can be talked out of his fears but a proportionately larger number in the middle socio-economic class held this misconception.

The two classes of parents indicated the greatest degree of variation in their responses to the statement: maternal attitudes toward toilet training are independent of attitudes toward other behaviors. Of those responding

to the item, a large proportion of the parents (71.8 per cent) of the middle socio-economic class held this misbelief, while only a small proportion of the respondents (27.4 per cent) of the low socio-economic class held this misbelief. While a proportionately larger per cent of the low socio-economic parents answered the statement false, a notable portion (40.3 per cent) responded that they did not know. This may account for the wide variation in the two classes, as all the parents of the middle socio-economic class answered either true or false.

### Discussion of the Ethnic Groups

#### Background Information

Personal background information was obtained from the 100 families (62 black and 38 white) participating in the study through the use of an "Interview Schedule." The purpose of this instrument was to obtain information from the subjects relative to age, level of education, occupation, and type of financial assistance received by the family. Percentages of responses are presented in Table VII.

Ages of the mothers ranged from below 25 to 46 years. The highest percentage of mothers in the black ethnic group (37.1 per cent) were in the 26 to 35 years range. The highest percentage of mothers in the white ethnic

TABLE VII

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF TWO ETHNIC GROUPS  
PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Characteristics	Ethnic Groups			
	Black (N=62)		White (N=38)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
<u>Ages</u>				
Mothers				
Up to 25	15	24.2	2	5.3
26 to 35	23	37.1	18	47.4
36 to 45	20	32.3	16	42.1
46 and over	4	6.4	1	2.6
No response	0	0.0	1	2.6
Fathers				
Up to 25	10	16.1	0	0.0
26 to 35	13	21.0	16	44.7
36 to 45	21	33.9	17	42.1
46 and over	6	9.6	0	0.0
No response	12	19.4	5	13.2
<u>Education</u>				
Mothers				
Elementary	3	4.8	0	0.0
Junior high	14	22.7	5	13.2
Senior high	32	51.6	23	60.5
College	11	17.7	8	21.1
Other	1	1.6	1	2.6
No response	1	1.6	1	2.6
Fathers				
Elementary	6	9.7	1	2.6
Junior high	9	14.5	3	7.9
Senior high	26	41.9	15	39.5
College	8	12.9	13	34.2
Other	1	1.6	1	2.6
No response	12	19.4	5	13.2



TABLE VII---Continued

Characteristics	Ethnic Groups			
	Black (N=62)		White (N=38)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
<u>Occupations</u>				
Mothers				
Professional	12	19.4	3	7.9
Clerical and sales occupations	1	1.6	4	10.5
Service occupations	13	21.1	2	5.2
Machine trades	14	22.6	9	23.7
Unemployed	21	33.9	18	47.4
No response	1	1.6	2	5.3
Fathers				
Professional	8	12.9	3	7.9
Clerical and sales occupations	0	0.0	3	7.9
Service occupations	6	9.6	4	10.4
Machine trades	20	32.3	18	47.4
Structural work	9	14.5	2	5.3
Unemployed	4	6.5	3	7.9
No response	15	24.2	5	13.2
Financial Assistance*				
None	5	8.1	2	5.2
Social security	5	8.1	0	0.0
Welfare	3	3.2	1	2.6
Child support	0	0.0	1	2.6
Other	5	8.1	2	5.2
No response	48	77.4	32	84.2

\*Four families in the black ethnic group indicated receiving financial assistance from more than one source.

group (47.4 per cent) were in the 26 to 35 years range. The age of one mother of the white ethnic group was not reported (Table VII). The age range of the fathers was from below 25 to 46 years. The largest percentage of fathers in the black ethnic group (33.9 per cent) were in the 36 to 45 years of age range. The largest percentage of fathers in the white ethnic group (44.7 per cent) were in the 26 to 35 years of age range. Of the 100 families interviewed, 17 were matriarchal. Reasons given for the absence of fathers in the home were divorce, seperation, desertion, or fathers were deceased (Table VII).

Each parent was requested to indicate the highest level of education completed. The majority of the mothers in the black ethnic group (51.6 per cent) and the white ethnic group (60.5 per cent) indicated senior high as the highest completed level of education. Of the families interviewed, a proportionately larger number of the fathers in each group (41.9 per cent of the black ethnic group and 39.5 per cent of the white ethnic group) indicated senior high as the highest level of education completed (Table VII).

Occupations were classified according to the Dictionary of Occupational Index, 1968 Supplement (34). Union is largely a textile community, therefore, the largest proportion of the mothers (22.6 per cent of the

black ethnic group and 23.7 per cent of the white ethnic group) were employed in the machine trades. One mother of the black ethnic group and two mothers of the white ethnic group did not respond to that item on the questionnaire. Occupations of the fathers were categorized the same as occupations of the mothers. The major proportion of fathers in the black ethnic group (32.3 per cent) and the white ethnic group (47.4 per cent) were employed in the machine trades (Table VII).

Information obtained in regard to financial assistance received by families indicated that 19.4 per cent in the black ethnic group received financial assistance. Only 10.4 per cent of the families in the white ethnic group indicated receiving any type of financial assistance. Four families in the black ethnic group indicated receiving assistance from two sources (Table VII).

#### Sources of Child-Rearing Ideas

Parents receive ideas on rearing children from many sources both consciously and subconsciously. Generally, the sources from which both ethnic groups received ideas on child-rearing were similar. The majority of parents in the black ethnic group (91.9 per cent) and white ethnic group (94.7 per cent) indicated receiving ideas on rearing

their children from their own parents. Parents in the black ethnic group indicated friends, literature and other relatives, respectively, as other important sources from which they received ideas on child-rearing. The white ethnic parents assigned equal importance to literature and other relatives as sources from which they received ideas on child-rearing. Friends ranked fourth as a source from which this group received ideas on child-rearing (Table VIII).

TABLE VIII

SOURCES FROM WHICH PARENTS OF TWO ETHNIC GROUPS  
RECEIVED IDEAS ON CHILD-REARING

Sources	Ethnic Groups			
	Black (N=62)		White (N=38)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Own parents	57	91.9	36	94.7
Other relatives	23	37.1	19	50.0
Literature	24	38.7	19	50.0
Friends	26	41.9	16	42.1
P.T.A.	14	22.6	1	2.6
Community groups	13	21.0	2	5.3
Church	19	30.6	12	31.6
Health department	9	14.5	3	7.9
Other sources	3	4.8	0	0.0

## Disciplinary Techniques

### Positive Techniques of Discipline

The white ethnic group chose the positive technique of assisting the child with the routine (helping child with task to be performed) significantly more frequently than the black ethnic group. No notable differences were indicated between the two groups in the use of other positive techniques listed on the questionnaire. However, rewarding was the positive technique most often selected by the white ethnic group and reasoning was the preferred technique by the black ethnic group (Table IX).

### Negative Techniques of Discipline

Putting to bed, spanking, coaxing, and isolation were the four forms of negative discipline with which the two ethnic groups indicated significant variations in their use. The black ethnic group showed a greater preference for putting to bed, spanking, and coaxing and the white ethnic group selected isolation as a discipline technique more often than the black ethnic group. Ridiculing, washing the mouth with soap, and pinching were forms of discipline selected by a very small number of black parents. None of the white respondents indicated use of these techniques. Neither ethnic group indicated use of

TABLE IX

DIFFERENCES IN USE OF POSITIVE TECHNIQUES OF DISCIPLINE  
BY BLACK AND WHITE ETHNIC GROUPS

Positive Techniques of Discipline	Use of Positive Techniques						Analysis	
	Per cent of Black Ethnic Group			Per cent of White Ethnic Group				
	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
Reasoning	46.8	32.3	21.0	57.9	31.6	10.5	2.09	> .05
Rewarding	17.7	37.1	45.2	7.9	39.5	52.6	1.94	> .05
Praising	32.3	30.6	37.1	28.9	42.1	28.9	1.43	> .05
Substituting activities	17.7	29.0	53.2	13.2	50.0	36.8	4.45	> .05
Assisting child with routine	14.5	45.2	40.2	7.9	73.7	18.4	7.82	< .05

\*P .05 indicates that the chi<sup>2</sup> value would occur only 5/100 times by chance.

TABLE X

DIFFERENCES IN USE OF NEGATIVE TECHNIQUES OF DISCIPLINE  
BY BLACK AND WHITE ETHNIC GROUPS

Negative Techniques of Discipline	Use of Negative Techniques						Analysis	
	Per cent of Black Ethnic Group			Per cent of White Ethnic Group				
	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Chi <sup>2</sup>	P
Isolation	1.6	29.0	69.4	10.5	47.4	42.1	8.91	<.05
Scolding	14.5	43.5	41.9	10.5	47.4	42.1	0.37	>.05
Spanking	51.6	38.7	9.7	47.4	52.6	0.0	15.83	<.05
Ignoring	3.2	29.0	67.7	0.0	15.8	84.2	3.81	>.05
Coaxing	6.5	29.0	64.5	0.0	2.6	97.4	14.40	<.05
Nagging	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05
Condemning	1.6	3.2	95.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05
Slapping	0.0	9.7	90.3	0.0	2.6	97.4	1.80	>.05
Bribery	0.0	4.8	95.2	0.0	2.6	97.4	0.29	>.05
Teasing	1.6	4.8	93.5	0.0	5.3	94.7	0.63	>.05
Comparing	0.0	14.5	85.5	0.0	5.3	94.7	2.06	>.05
Ridiculing	3.2	9.7	87.1	0.0	0.0	100.0	4.05	>.05

TABLE X --Continued

Negative Techniques of Discipline	Use of Negative Techniques						Analysis	
	Per cent of Black Ethnic Group			Per cent of White Ethnic Group				
	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Used Most Often	Used Sometimes	No Response	Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
Putting to bed	27.4	46.8	25.8	2.6	31.6	65.8	18.56	<.05
Washing mouth with soap	0.0	1.6	98.4	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05
Pinching	1.6	6.5	91.9	0.0	0.0	100.0	2.60	>.05
Pulling hair	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05
Biting	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.00	>.05
Frightening him	0.0	9.7	90.3	0.0	2.6	97.4	1.80	>.05

\*p <.05 indicates that the chi<sup>2</sup> value would occur only 5/100 times by chance.



nagging, pulling hair, or biting as a form of discipline (Table X).

#### Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge

Each family was asked to answer seventeen true-false statements on child-rearing knowledge. According to Montgomery (26), three of the statements were false. No significant differences were found between the proportionate number of responses by the two groups to either of the false statements (Table XI).

The black and white ethnic groups differed significantly in their opinions on six of the true statements. The greatest difference existed concerning their belief about the statement: isolation is often devoted to exploring the genital organs or daydreaming. While a majority of both ethnic groups believed the statement to be true, a greater proportionate number of the black ethnic group (66.1 per cent), as compared to 57.9 per cent of the white ethnic group, was correct in their belief about the statement.

A majority of the parents in each ethnic group responded true to the statement: some children need more sleep than other children. However, a significantly larger proportion of the parents in the white ethnic group

TABLE XI  
RESPONSES OF BLACK AND WHITE ETHNIC GROUPS TO  
STATEMENTS OF CHILD-REARING KNOWLEDGE

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Ethnic Groups						Analysis	
	Black			White				
	True	False	Do Not Know	True	False	Do Not Know	Chi <sup>2</sup>	P*
Some children need more sleep than other children	72.6	12.9	14.5	97.4	0.0	2.6	10.00	<.05
Lack of adequate sleep is reflected in the appearance of the child	79.0	19.4	1.6	78.9	21.1	0.0	0.65	>.05
Lack of adequate sleep is reflected in a child's behavior	98.4	1.6	0.0	97.4	2.6	0.0	0.00	>.05
Emotional aspects of the home are important in promoting good sleep habits	72.6	8.1	19.4	73.7	10.5	15.8	0.32	>.05

TABLE XI--Continued

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Ethnic Groups						Analysis	
	Black			White				
	True	False	Do Not	True	False	Do Not	Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
			Know			Know		
Some fears which increase during the pre-school periods are fears of imaginary creatures, being alone, and fears of the dark	59.7	29.0	11.3	78.9	21.1	0.0	6.17	<.05
A child tends to reflect the fears of parents	59.7	30.6	8.1	78.9	18.4	2.6	3.80	>.05
A child can be talked out of his fears	48.4	35.5	16.1	68.4	18.4	13.2	4.19	>.05
Some behavior problems occur as a result of growth	66.1	9.7	24.2	76.3	15.8	5.3	6.07	<.05
Sulking and whining become more common expressions of anger as children grow older	38.7	46.8	14.5	65.8	23.7	10.5	7.12	<.05

TABLE XI--Continued

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Ethnic Groups						Analysis		
	Black			White					
	True	False	Do Not Know	True	False	Do Not Know	Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*	
Stuttering or repetitions are frequent in children between 2 and 5 years of age	40.3	45.2	14.5	34.2	57.9	7.9	1.86	>.05	6
Maternal attitudes toward toilet training are independent of attitudes toward other behaviors	38.7	33.9	27.4	52.6	26.3	21.1	1.85	>.05	
Anxieties established during the toilet training period may make sexual adjustment in adolescence and adulthood more difficult	30.6	29.0	38.7	18.4	47.4	31.6	3.89	>.05	
Temporary lapses in bowel and bladder control may develop from strict training by the mother	40.3	43.5	16.1	31.6	63.2	5.3	4.58	>.05	

TABLE XI--Continued

Statements of Child-Rearing Knowledge	Per cent of Ethnic Groups						Analysis  Chi <sup>2</sup>	p*
	Black			White				
	True	False	Do Not Know	True	False	Do Not Know		
Speech difficulties may be regarded as normal during the pre-school years	69.4	25.8	3.2	44.7	52.6	2.6	7.08	<.05
Strict physical punish- ment is a common cause of aggressiveness	43.5	32.3	24.2	39.5	42.1	18.4	1.08	>.05
Isolation is often devoted to exploring the genital organs or daydreaming	66.1	22.6	11.3	31.6	57.9	10.5	13.43	<.05
Boys and girls of the same pre-school age have equal language skills	27.4	56.5	16.1	31.6	63.2	5.3	2.64	>.05

\*p <.05 indicates that the chi<sup>2</sup> value would occur only 5/100 times by chance.

(97.4 per cent) responded true to the statement than did parents of the black ethnic group (72.6 per cent).

A larger proportionate number of parents in the black ethnic group (69.4 per cent) were correct in their belief that speech difficulties may be regarded as normal during the pre-school years. A majority (52.6 per cent) of the white ethnic parents responded false to the statement.

Although a majority of the parents of both ethnic groups believed that some fears which increase during the pre-school period are fears of imaginary creatures, being alone and fears of the dark, the proportion of responses by the two groups were significantly different. By proportion the white ethnic group (78.9 per cent) indicated more correct responses than did the black ethnic group (59.7 per cent).

Significant differences were also found in the responses of the two ethnic groups to the statement: some behavior problems occur as a result of growth. A majority of both groups (76.3 per cent of the white ethnic group and 66.1 per cent of the black ethnic group) were correct in responding true to the statement. However, by proportion, the white ethnic group indicated a greater awareness of this fact.

A majority of the parents in the white ethnic group (65.8 per cent) were correct in their belief that sulking and whining become more common expressions of anger as children grow older. Only 38.7 per cent of the black ethnic group were correct in their belief about the statement.

Another important finding from these results was the fact the two groups shared several misconceptions. Although the groups did not differ significantly in their responses to the statements, a proportionately large number of the responses from both groups were incorrect.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The author of the present study was concerned with comparing child-rearing practices and disciplinary techniques between low socio-economic and middle socio-economic parents. In addition, the participants were subdivided into black and white ethnic groups for the purpose of similar comparisons between the ethnic groups. A total of 100 families residing in Union, South Carolina were surveyed. The parents of the families consisted of 83 fathers and 100 mothers ranging in age from 25 to 46 years. Seventeen families were matriarchal.

Data for the study were collected by means of a survey during the spring and summer of 1971. The "Interview Schedule," "Techniques of Discipline," and "Statements on Child-Rearing" were the three instruments employed to survey the participants.

The socio-economic levels of families were derived from the Dictionary of Occupational Index, 1968 Supplement (34), based upon income and educational levels. Sixty-two families were classified in the low socio-economic class



and 38 families were in the middle socio-economic class. The participants of the study were further categorized by ethnic groups (62 black and 38 white).

The chi-square test was employed to determine if significant differences existed between the low socio-economic and middle socio-economic classes or between the black and white ethnic groups with respect to child-rearing practices and disciplinary techniques. A chi-square value large enough to be significant at the .05 level was accepted as indicative of a difference which was not likely to be due to chance. Other data used in the study were reported in terms of percentages.

Of the fathers who participated in the study, 41.0 per cent had completed senior high school. The majority of the mothers were senior high school graduates and 19.0 per cent were college graduates.

The majority of the fathers were employed in the machine trades. A larger percentage of the mothers participating in the study were not formally employed. Of those mothers who were employed, the majority were employed in the machine trades.

A notably large majority of the families indicated that no financial assistance was received. The veracity

of these responses is questionable, as previous studies indicate that pride sometimes will not allow parents to answer truthfully to questions concerning dependence on society for aid.

Generally, the source from which the parents of the low and middle socio-economic class received ideas on child-rearing were very similar. A majority of the parents of both socio-economic classes indicated receiving their ideas on rearing children from their parents. However, a larger proportion of the middle socio-economic parents, than of the low socio-economic parents indicated other relatives and literature as important sources from which ideas on child-rearing were received.

When compared according to ethnic identification, the participants indicated several similarities with respect to sources from which they received ideas on child-rearing. Parents of the black and white ethnic groups indicated their own parents as the most important source from which they received ideas on child-rearing. Friends, literature, and relatives were other sources from which a notable proportion of the black ethnic parents received ideas on child-rearing. However, a larger percentage of the white ethnic group indicated other relatives, literature, and friends as important sources

from which ideas on child-rearing were received. Often parents absorb ideas without being aware of receiving them.

Critics in the field of child development have stated that desirable behavior must be substituted for undesirable behavior when disciplining children. Parents of the middle socio-economic class indicated praising as the preferred form of discipline. The low socio-economic class indicated reasoning as their most frequently used positive technique of discipline. Praising and assisting the child with routine (helping child with task to be performed) ranked second and third respectively as positive techniques of discipline used most frequently by middle socio-economic parents. The low socio-economic parents indicated assisting child with routine and praising as their second and third preferred techniques of discipline.

The subjects of this study showed a definite preference for the positive forms of discipline over the negative forms of discipline in their child-rearing practices. But notable differences were found to exist between the socio-economic classes in their use of three negative forms of discipline. The negative form of discipline used most often by the parents was spanking. However, spanking was used by a significantly larger proportion of the low socio-economic parents than the

middle socio-economic parents. Putting to bed was also a form of discipline selected significantly more often by the low socio-economic parents than by middle socio-economic parents. The middle socio-economic parents indicated a significantly greater preference for isolation as a form of discipline than the low socio-economic parents.

A tendency to guess an answer was evident when a true or false answer was to be given. In this study the participants responded to 17 true-false statements relative to child-rearing knowledge. A larger proportion of the responses by the middle socio-economic parents than by the low socio-economic parents were correct. Only four of the 13 true statements were answered correctly by a majority of the parents in both socio-economic classes:

- 1) lack of adequate sleep is reflected in the appearance of the child,
- 2) emotional aspects of the home are important in promoting good sleep habits,
- 3) a child tends to reflect the fears of parents, and
- 4) some fears which increase during the pre-school periods are fears of imaginary creatures, being alone and fears of the dark.

In each instance however, a significantly larger proportion

of the middle socio-economic parents marked the statement true.

A proportionately larger per cent of the middle socio-economic parents responded correctly to the statement: sulking and whining become more common expressions of anger as children grow older. The larger proportion of the responses by the low socio-economic parents were incorrect.

Parents of both socio-economic classes reflected a misconception in that they appeared to believe that a child can be talked out of his fears. Parents of the low socio-economic class reflected a misconception concerning the statement: temporary lapses in bowel and bladder control may develop from strict training by the mother. A majority of the parents in the middle socio-economic class responded incorrectly to the statement: maternal attitudes toward toilet training are independent of attitudes toward other behaviors.

A need for better knowledge of some concepts used in this study was evident. This conclusion was based on the percentage of "do not know" responses and the responses which indicated the fostering of misconceptions.

The white ethnic group chose the positive techniques of assisting the child with the routine (helping child with task to be performed) significantly more frequently than the black ethnic group. No notable differences were indicated between the two groups in the use of the other positive techniques listed on the questionnaire. However, rewarding was the positive technique most often selected by the white ethnic group and reasoning was the preferred technique by the black ethnic group.

Putting to bed, spanking, coaxing, and isolation were the four forms of negative discipline with which the two ethnic groups indicated significant variations in their use. The black ethnic group showed a greater preference for putting to bed, spanking and coaxing and the white ethnic group selected isolation as a discipline technique more often than the black ethnic group. Ridiculing, washing the mouth with soap and pinching were forms of discipline selected by a very small number of blacks. None of the white respondents indicated use of these techniques. Neither ethnic group indicated use of nagging, pulling hair or biting as forms of discipline.

Each family was asked to answer seventeen true-false statements on child-rearing knowledge. No significant differences were found between the proportionate number of

responses by the two groups to either of the false statements.

The black and white ethnic groups differed significantly in their opinions on six of the true statements. The greatest difference existed concerning their belief about the statement: isolation is often devoted to exploring the genital organs or daydreaming. A majority of both ethnic groups believed the statement to be true but a greater proportionate number of the black ethnic group was correct in their belief about the statement than of the white ethnic group.

A proportionately larger per cent of the white ethnic group than the black ethnic group responded correctly to the following statements:

- 1) some children need more sleep than other children,
- 2) some fears which increase during the pre-school period are fears of imaginary creatures, being alone and fear of the dark,
- 3) some behavior problems occur as a result of growth, and
- 4) sulking and whining become more common expressions of anger as children grow older.

Another important finding from these results was that the two groups shared several misconceptions. Although the groups did not differ significantly in their responses to

the statements, a proportionately large number of the responses from both groups were incorrect.

Research conducted in the 1940's indicated significant differences between the social classes in child-rearing practices among the subjects of that study. However, another study cited in the related literature conducted in the early 1970's indicated a narrowing of the gap between the middle socio-economic class parents and the low socio-economic class parents relative to child-rearing practices. According to this study a greater proportion of the middle socio-economic parents than of the low socio-economic parents indicated a knowledge of child-rearing practices which was more consistent with acceptable practices of today. In addition, the narrowing of the gap between ethnic groups is evidenced by the relatively few significant differences found between the black ethnic and white ethnic parents in the choice of techniques for disciplining their children. Few significant differences were found in parents' knowledge or lack of knowledge in response to statements of child-rearing knowledge. An important implication is that the gap is gradually closing in kind and quality of education being received by the black and white ethnic groups.



Further study should be undertaken on child-rearing practices in various selected geographical areas that would give a good sampling of the types of disciplinary techniques used and the extent of child-rearing knowledge. Courses or classes in parent education should be established to meet the needs of parents where necessary.

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